

Office of the Secretary of Labor

§ 70.42

fee need be charged. Under normal circumstances, fees which do not exceed \$5.00 need not be collected.

(c) *Reformulating requests.* When the estimated reproduction costs are likely to exceed \$25.00, the requester may be notified of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance its willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such notice may invite the requester to reformulate the request to satisfy his or her needs at a lower cost.

§ 70.42 Ancillary considerations.

(a) *Costs assessed when no records are disclosed.* The costs of searching for and, in the case of a commercial use request, reviewing records may be assessed even where ultimately no documents are disclosed or located.

(b) *Aggregating requests.* A requester may not file multiple requests, each seeking portions of a document or documents in order to avoid the payment of fees. When there is reason to believe that a requester or a group of requesters acting in concert, is attempting to break a request down into a series of requests for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, any such requests may be aggregated and the requesters charged as if there were only a single request.

(c) *Advance payments.* An advance payment before work is commenced or continued on a request, may not be required unless:

(1) It is estimated or determined that the allowable charge that a requester may be required to pay are likely to exceed \$250. When a determination is made that the allowable charges are likely to exceed \$250, the requester shall be notified of the likely cost and be required to provide satisfactory assurance of full payment where the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees, or be required to tender advance payment of at least 50% of the full estimated charges in the case of requesters with no history of payment; or

(2) A requester has previously failed to pay a fee charged in a timely fashion (i.e., within 30 days of the date of the billing) in which case the requester may be required:

(i) To pay the full amount owed plus any applicable interest as provided in § 70.41(e), when an outstanding balance is due and owing, and

(ii) To make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before the component begins to process a new request.

(3) In any case, the payment of outstanding fees may be required before responsive materials are actually disclosed to a requester.

(d) *Time limits to respond extended when advance payments requested.* When an advance payment of fees in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section has been requested the administrative time limits prescribed in subsection (a)(6) of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6), will only begin to run after such advance payment has been received by the agency.

(e) *Interest charges.* Interest charges on an unpaid bill may be assessed starting on the 31st day following the day on which the billing was sent. Interest shall be at the rate prescribed in section 3717 of title 31 U.S.C. and shall accrue from the date of the billing.

(f) *Authentication of copies—(1) Fees.* The Freedom of Information Act does not require certification or attestation under seal of copies of records furnished in accordance with its provisions. Pursuant to provisions of the general user-charger statute, 31 U.S.C. 9701 and subchapter II of title 29 U.S.C., the following charges may be made where such services are requested:

(i) For certification of true copies, each \$1.

(ii) For attestation under the seal of the Department, each \$3.

(2) *Authority and form for attestation under seal.* Authority is hereby given to any officer or officers of the Department of Labor designated as authentication officer or officers of the Department to sign and issue attestations under the seal of the Department of Labor.

(g) *Transcripts.* All transcripts shall be made available in accordance with the terms set forth in § 70.40.